

# World's deepest art installation dumped 4.3 miles underwater near Mariana Trench

Artist Lakshmi Mohanbabu has placed three symbolic cubes near the Mariana Trench, her next destination? The Moon.

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Artist Lakshmi Mohanbabu has made history by placing three symbolic cubes near the Mariana Trench.

Youtube/NTUsg

Singapore has achieved a new global first—an underwater art gallery at an extraordinary depth of around 4.3 miles (7 kilometers). Three stainless-steel cubes, designed by Singaporean artist Lakshmi Mohanbabu, were placed in the Mariana Trench off Japan's coast. (x)

This installation pays homage to those affected by natural disasters and serves as a seismic sensor for early earthquake detection.

Even more remarkably, Ms. Mohanbabu is the first Singaporean to travel into space (aboard the International Space Station in 2022) and has a permanent installation on the Moon in 2025.

## An unanticipated collaboration

The underwater placement was led by NuStar Technologies, which collaborated with Japan's Agency for Marine-Earth Science and Technology (JAMSTEC). In December 2024, JAMSTEC and NuStar successfully integrated the cubes into the Dense Ocean Network System for Earthquakes and [Tsunamis](#) (DONET), part of the Long-Term Borehole Monitoring System (LTBMS).

Originally designed to track seismic activity at tectonic plate boundaries, the LTBMS now hosts three remarkable works of art. A specially developed ultra-deep-sea camera system followed these cubes' journey to the ocean floor, capturing photos and videos as they reached a record-breaking depth. According to NuStar's Managing Director, Mr. Goi Kim Kok, "Together with Lakshmi and our partners at JAMSTEC, we have demonstrated that the deep ocean can be a platform for both scientific discovery and [cultural expression](#)." One of the cubes was fabricated through a cutting-edge process by researchers at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore (NTU). The novel LAPIS (Laser Patterning and Incorporation of Sheets) technology fuses ultra-thin stainless-steel layers into a corrosion-resistant shell, yielding a structure over 70 percent stronger than standard steel.

Assistant Professor Lai Changquan, who co-led this effort, said, “Creating a piece of art capable of withstanding the immense pressures of the [deep ocean](#) is a testament to the versatility and durability of our technology.”

## Art, symbolism, and global resonance

Each hollow cube measures 10 cm along each side and showcases Ms. Mohanbabu’s “Universal Language of Symbols.” Five distinct designs—Nautilus, Primary, Secondary, Windmill, and Dromenon—adorn the cubes, reflecting nine existential human elements like Creation, Lifecycles, Direction, and Time.

While all cubes share the same basic shape, each displays a different pattern on the top face: one highlights Dromenon, another showcases Primary, and the third features Nautilus.

“Art has the unique ability to connect humanity across physical and metaphorical depths,” Ms. Mohanbabu explains. “With the Deep Ocean Interactions Project, we aim to inspire meaningful change, highlighting our interconnected existence by bringing people together through a shared journey and purpose.”

The artist also noted that the two small “Interactions” cubes she previously sent into [Earth’s orbit](#) will soon be placed on the Moon. With that, Singapore becomes the first nation to hold a place in both deep-sea and lunar art history. “This milestone,” says Ms. Mohanbabu, “is also a testament to Singapore’s pioneering spirit and tenacity as we celebrate SG60 this year.”